



1300 17<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 1000  
Sacramento, CA 95811  
(916) 445-8696  
FAX: (916) 445-4927

MHSOAC Communications Unit  
Monthly Report  
March 2008

Dear Commissioners:

### **In the news**

In March, we took a big step toward fulfilling the OAC's important goals of media outreach, community education and stigma reduction by arranging a public radio interview of OAC Chair Linford Gayle. Mr. Gayle was the headliner guest on KXJZ's public affairs program "Insight," and was interviewed by well-known Sacramento broadcast journalist Jeffrey Callison. During the conversation, which was aired live, Mr. Gayle spoke candidly about his experience as a consumer and the professional and personal goals he has been able to achieve despite challenges he faced as a younger man.

He also stressed how humbled he feels to serve as chair of the OAC, and how honored he is to be able to work in tandem with Vice Chair Andrew Poat, whose organizational and action-oriented skill sets he believes complement his own and will help make this leadership team quite effective.

"Insight" is a well-regarded public affairs program aired daily on the National Public Radio affiliate station based at California State University, Sacramento. Its audience largely overlaps with readers of the Sacramento Bee and its Capitol Bureau coverage. You can hear the interview, which lasts about 20 minutes, by going to [www.capradio.org](http://www.capradio.org) and locating the podcast for March 20.

### **Media Resources**

We pulled together some "talking points," or fact sheets, for Mr. Gayle to review before the live interview. Reading over the basics about the Mental

Health Services Act and the Commission's principles as well as other facts and figures is good preparation for a media interview. It allows you to be more confident and relaxed, creating a comfort zone that allows you to speak with sincerity and conviction. And that always makes for more interesting listening or reading for your media audience.

Remember, the Communications Unit is poised to do this same task for any and all Commissioners in preparation for media interviews. We will come up with possible questions to anticipate, possible answers and even do mock interviews. And we all need to keep in mind to make clear to interviewers whether you are speaking for the Commission as a whole, or as an individual.

### **Newsletter launch**

By now, you may have seen our first newsletter. We hope to produce these monthly or every other month, depending on what our workload allows. The goals are simple: to help us get to know each other, to help Commissioners learn what areas of expertise individual OAC staff members are amassing, what the staff is up to, and news and information on the Commissioners.

Also, we plan to report on MHSA programs and how they are impacting the people they serve and give supplemental information on topics of interest and business coming before the Commission. Please give us feedback, send us ideas, send us news of your talks, speeches, presentations, conferences, professional goings-on, travel or anything you think your colleagues might be interested in – and might help folks learn a bit more about you.

If we discovered one thing during the Strategic Planning Meeting in March, it's that the Commissioners enjoyed bonding and getting to know each other. That, and a roomful of Commissioners produces a room-and-a-half full of new inspirations and ideas!

### **On the Website**

We are continuing to work on one of our top priorities – redoing the website so it's more user-friendly for the public and Commissioners and stakeholders.

This, of course, is an ongoing project for us – and last month we brought it closer to closure by interviewing several promising applicants for the communications unit specifically to tend to the website. We are excited to

welcome as a new Communications Team member Yee Xiong, a recent graduate of the University of California at Davis. She'll come on board toward the end of April, giving us more hands on deck so we can accomplish our website goals in a timely manner.

### **Community Outreach**

As story-tellers, we of course need stories to tell, so the Communications Unit reached out to Turning Point, a provider of MHSA programs in Sacramento and the Central Valley. Turning Point's staff pulled together a luncheon with about 15 clients who were willing to talk about their lives, challenges and triumphs. There were lots of tears, some discomfort and a hugely encouraging display of peer support among the group.

It was incredibly moving to hear of the pain and joy and challenges facing these clients, who were all working hard to regain productive lives. Turning Point's staff, aided in part by MHSA funds, clearly demonstrated a positive influence in gently steering these folks toward their best possible outcomes. We very much appreciate the opportunity Turning Point provided us to witness the human stories behind the goals of the Commission. We will be sharing some of these stories in the newsletter and with our contacts in the media.

### **Building Relationships**

We hosted a meeting at our offices with the External Affairs Communications crew from DMH – Nancy Kincaid, Chief of External Affairs and Communications; Kirsten Deichert and Jennifer Turner – to discuss collaborating on messages to the public. Ms. Kincaid noted the importance of working toward talking points and messages collaboratively, especially during the state budget process when challenges to the MHSA fund may arise. We've all agreed to check in with each other by conference call twice a month during the OAC's regular Wednesday communications units meetings.

Best Regards,

Cynthia Craft, Chief of Communications and Media Relations  
Matthew Lieberman, Associate Mental Health Specialist, Communications  
Yee Xiong, Communications Staff  
Gia Vang, Student Intern  
Christina Call, Student Intern